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WHERE WILL IT END?

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A VIEW

OF

SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES

IN ITS

AGGRESSIONS AND RESULTS.

A COMMUNICATION SUPPOSED TO BE MADE BY A LEADING DEMOCRAT LIVING IN "EGYPT" OR SOUTHERN ILLINOIS. ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE "ATLANTIC MONTHLY," UNDER THE TITLE OF "WHERE WILL IT END?"

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WHERE WILL IT END?

Wise men of every name and nation, whether poets, philosophers, statesmen or divines, have been trying to explain the puzzle of human condition, since the world began. For three thousand years, at least, they have been at this problem, and it is far enough from being solved yet. Its anomalies seem to have been expressly contrived by Nature to elude our curiosity and defy our cunning. And no part of it has she arranged so craftily as that web of institutions, habits, manners and customs, in which we find ourselves enmeshed as soon as we begin to have any perception at all, and which, slight and almost invisible as it may seem, it is so hard to struggle with and so impossible to break through. It may be true, according to the poetical Platonism of Wordsworth, that "heaven lies about us in our infancy;" but we very soon leave it far behind us, and, as we approach manhood, sadly discover that we have grown up into a jurisdiction of a very different kind.

In almost every region of the earth, indeed, it is literally true that "shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy." As his faculties develop, he becomes more and more conscious of the deepening shadows, as well as of the grim walls that cast them on his soul; and his opening in-

telligence is earliest exercised in divining who built them first, and why they exist at all. The infant Chinese, the baby Calmuck, the suckling Hottentot, we must suppose, rest unconsciously in the calm of the heaven from which they, too, have emigrated, as well as the sturdy new-born Briton, or the freest and most independent little Yankee that is native and to the manner born of this great country of our own. But all alike grow gradually into a consciousness of walls, which, though invisible, are none the less impassable, and of chains, though light as air, yet stronger than brass or iron. And everywhere is the machinery ready, though different in its frame and operation in different torture-chambers, to crush out the budding scepticism, and to mould the mind into the monotonous decency of general conformity. Fo or Fetish, King or Kaiser, Deity itself or the vicegerents it has appointed in its stead, are answerable for it all. God himself has looked upon it, and it is very good, and there is no appeal from that approval of the heavenly vision.

In almost every country in the world this deification of institutions has been promoted by their antiquity. As nobody can remember when they were not, and as no authentic records exist of their first establishment, their genealogy can be traced direct to Heaven without danger of positive disproof. Thus royal races, hereditary aristocracies and privileged priesthoods established themselves so firmly in the opinion of Europe, as well as in Asia, and still retain so much of their *prestige* there, notwithstanding the turnings and overturnings of the last two centuries. The northern half of the great American continent, however, seems to have been kept back by nature as a *tabula rasa*, a clean blackboard, on which the great problem of civil government might be worked out, without any of the incongruous drawbacks which have cast perplexity and despair upon those who have undertaken its solution in the elder world. All the elements of the demonstration

were of the most favorable nature. Settled by races who had inherited or achieved whatever of constitutional liberty existed in the world, with no hereditary monarch, or governing oligarchy, or established religion on the soil,—with every opportunity to avoid all the vices and to better all the virtues of the old politics,—the era before which all history had been appointed to prepare the way, seemed to have arrived, when the just relations of personal liberty and civil government were to be established forever.

And how magnificent the field on which the trophy of this final victory of a true civilization was to be erected! No empire or kingdom, at least since imperial Rome perished from the earth, ever unrolled a surface so vast and so variegated, so manifold in its fertilities and so various in its aspects of beauty and sublimity. From the Northern wastes, where the hunter and the trapper pursue by force or guile the fur-bearing animals, to the ever-perfumed latitudes of the lemon and the myrtle,—from the stormy Atlantic, where the skiff of the fisherman rocks fearlessly under the menace of beetling crags amid the foam of angry breakers, to where the solemn surge of the Pacific pours itself around our Western continent,—Nature has spread out fields which ask only the magic touch of Labor to wave with every harvest and blush with every fruitage. Majestic forests crown the hills, asking to be transformed into homes for man on the solid earth, or into moving miracles in which he flies on wings of wind, or flame, over the ocean to the ends of the earth. Exhaustless mineral treasures offer themselves to his hand, scarce hidden beneath the soil, or lying carelessly upon the surface,—coal, and lead, and copper, and the "all-worshipped ore" of gold itself; while quarries, reaching to the centre, from many a rugged hill-top, barren of all beside, court the architect and the sculptor, ready to give shape to their dreams of beauty in the palace or in the statue.

The soil, too, is fitted by the influence of every sky for the production of every harvest that can bring food, comfort, wealth, and luxury to man. Every family of the grasses, every cereal that can strengthen the heart, every fruit that can delight the taste, every fibre that can be woven into raiment or persuaded into the thousand shapes of human necessity, asks but a gentle solicitation to pour its abundance bounteously into the bosom of the husbandman. And men have multiplied under these conditions thus auspicious to life, until they swarm on the Atlantic slope, and are fast filling up the great valley of the Mississippi, and gradually flow over upon the descent towards the Pacific. The three millions, who formed the population of the Thirteen States that set the British empire at defiance, have grown up into a nation of nearly, if not quite, ten times that strength, within the duration of active lives not yet finished. And in freedom from unmanageable debt, in abundance and certainty of revenue, in the materials for naval armaments, in the elements of which armies are made up, in everything that goes to form national wealth, power, and strength, the United States, it would seem even as they are now, might stand against the world in arms, or in the arts of peace. Are not these results proofs irrefragable of the wisdom of the government under which they have come to pass?

When the eyes of the thoughtful enquirer turn from the general prospect of the national greatness and strength, to the geographical divisions of the country, to examine the relative proportions of these gifts contributed by each, he begins to be aware that there are anomalies in the moral and political condition even of this youngest of nations, not unlike what have perplexed him in his observations of her elder sisters. He beholds the Southern region, embracing within its circuit three hundred thousand more square miles than the domain of the North, dowered with a soil incomparably more fertile, watered

by mighty rivers fit to float the argosies of the world, placed nearer the sun and canopied by more propitious skies, with every element of prosperity and wealth showered upon it with Nature's most full and unwithdrawing hand, and sees, that, notwithstanding all this, the share of public wealth and strength drawn thence is almost inappreciable by the side of what is poured into the common stock by the strenuous sterility of the North. With every opportunity and means that Nature can supply for commerce, with navigable rivers searching its remotest corners, with admirable harbors in which the navies of the world might ride, with the chief articles of export for its staple productions, it still depends upon its Northern partner to fetch and carry all that it produces, and the little that it consumes. Possessed of all the raw materials of manufactures and the arts, its inhabitants look to the North for everything they need, from the cradle to the coffin. Essentially agricultural in its constitution, with every blessing nature can bestow upon it, the gross value of all its productions is less by millions than that of the simple grass of the field gathered into Northern barns. With all the means and materials of wealth, the South is poor. With every advantage for gathering strength and self-reliance, it is weak and dependent. Why this difference between the two?

The *why* is not far to seek. It is to be found in the reward which Labor bestows on those that pay it due reverence in the one case, and the punishment it inflicts on those offering it outrage and insult in the other. All wealth proceeding forth from Labor, the land where it is honored and its ministers respected and rewarded, must needs rejoice in the greatest abundance of its gifts. Where, on the contrary, its exercise is regarded as the badge of dishonor and the vile office of the refuse and offscouring of the race, its largess must be proportionably meagre and scanty. The key of the enigma is to be found in the constitution of human nature. A man in fetters

cannot do the task-work that one whose limbs are unshackled looks upon as a pastime. A man urged by the prospect of winning an improved condition for himself and his children, by the skill of his brain and the industry of his hands, must needs achieve results such as no fear of torture can extort from one denied the holy stimulus of hope. Hence the difference so often noticed between tracts lying side by side, separated only by a river or an imaginary line: on one side of which, thrift and comfort and gathering wealth, growing villages, smiling farms, convenient habitations, school houses, and churches, make the landscape beautiful; while on the other, slovenly husbandry, dilapidated mansions, sordid huts, perilous wastes, horrible roads, the rare spire, and rarer village school betray all the nakedness of the land. It is the magic of motive that calls forth all this wealth and beauty to bless the most sterile soil stirred by willing and intelligent labor; while the reversing of that spell scatters squalor and poverty and misery over lands endowed by nature with the highest fertility, spreading their leprous infection from the laborer to his lord. All this is in strict accordance with the laws of God, as expounded by man in his books on political economy.

Not so, however, with the stranger phenomenon to be discerned inextricably connected with this anomaly, but not apparently, naturally and inevitably flowing from it. That the denial of his natural and civil rights to the laborer who sows and reaps the harvests of the Southern country should be avenged upon his enslaver in the scanty yielding of the earth, and in the unthrift, the vices, and the wretchedness which are the only crops that spring spontaneously from soil blasted by Slavery, is nothing strange. It is only the statement of the truism in moral and in political economy, that true prosperity can never grow up from wrong and wickedness. That pauperism, and ignorance, and vice,—that reckless habits, and debasing customs, and barbarous manners should come from

an organized degradation of labor, and of cruelty and injustice crystalized into an institution, is an inevitable necessity, and strictly according to the nature of things; but that the stronger half of the nation should suffer the weaker to rule over it in virtue of its weakness,—that the richer region should submit to the political tyranny of its impoverished moiety because of that very poverty, is indeed a marvel and a mystery. That the intelligent, educated and civilized portion of a race should consent to the sway of their ignorant, illiterate, and barbarian companions in the commonwealth, and this by reason of that uncouth barbarism, is an astonishment, and should be a hissing to all beholders everywhere. It would be so to ourselves, were we not so used to the fact,—had it not grown into our essence and ingrained itself with our nature as to seem a vital organism of our being. Of all the anomalies in morals and in politics which the histories of civilized man afford, this is surely the most abnormous and the most unreasonable.

The entire history of the United States is but the record of the evidence of this fact. What event in our annals is there that Slavery has not set her brand upon it to mark it as her own? In the very moment of the nation's birth, like the evil fairy of the nursery tale, she was present to curse it with her fatal words. The spell then wound up has gone on increasing in power, until the scanty formulas which seemed in those days of infancy as if they would fade out of the parchment into which they had been foisted, and leave no trace that they ever were, have blotted out all beside, and statesmen and judges read nothing there but the awful and all pervading name of Slavery. Once entrenched among the institutions of the country, this baleful power has advanced from one position to another, never losing ground, but establishing itself at each successive point more impregnable than before, until it has us at an advantage that encourages it to demand the surrender of our rights, our self-respect, and our honor. What was once whis-

pered in the secret chamber of council is now proclaimed upon the house-tops; what was once done by indirection and guile is now carried with the high hand, in the face of day, at the mouth of the cannon and by the edge of the sabre of the nation. Doctrines and designs which a few years since could find no mouthpiece out of a bar-room, or the piratical den of a filli-buster, are now clothed with power by the authentic response of the bench of our highest judicatory, and obsequiously iterated from the oracular recesses of the National Palace.

And the events that now fill the scene are but due successors in the train that has swept over the stage ever since the nineteenth century opened the procession with the purchase of Louisiana. The acquisition of that vast territory, important as it was in a national point of view,—but coveted by the South mainly as the fruitful mother of slave-holding States and for the precedent it established, that the Constitution was a barrier only to what it should impede, never to what might promote, the interests of Slavery,—was the first great stride she made as she stalked to her design. The admission of Missouri as a slave-holding State, granted after a struggle that shook American society to the centre, and then only on the memorable promises now broken to the ear as well as to the hope, was the next vantage-ground seized and maintained. The nearly cotemporary purchase of Florida, though in design and in effect as revolutionary an action as that of Louisiana, excited comparatively little opposition. It was but the following up of an acknowledged victory by the Slave Power. The long and bloody wars in her miserable swamps, waged against the humanity of savages that gave shelter to the fugitives from her tyranny,—slave-hunts, merely, on a national scale and at the common expense,—followed next in the march of events. Then Texas loomed in the distance, and, after years of gradual approach and covert advances, was first wrested from Mexico to Slavery next, indissolubly chained to her, and then, by a *coup*

et etat of astonishing impudence, was added, by a flourish of John Tyler's pen, in the very article of his political dissolution, to the "Area of Freedom!" Next came the war with Mexico, lying in its pretences, bloody in its conduct, triumphant in its results,—for it won vast regions suitable for Slavery now, and taught the way to win larger conquests when her ever-hungry maw should crave for them. What need to recount the Fugitive Slave Bill, and the other "Compromises" of 1850? or to recite the base repeal of the Missouri Compromise, showing the slave-holder's regard for promises to be as sacred as that of a pettifogger for justice or of a dicer for an oath? or to point to the plains of Kansas, red with the blood of her sons and blackned with the cinders of her towns, while the President of the United States held the sword of the nation at her throat to compel her to submission?

Success, perpetual and transcendent, such as has always waited on Slavery in all attempts to mould the history of the country, and to compel the course of events to do her bidding, naturally excites a measure of curiosity, if not of admiration, in the mind of every observer. Have the slave-owners thus gone on from victory to victory, and from strength to strength, by reason of their multitude, of their wealth, of their public services, of their intelligence, of their wisdom, of their genius, or of their virtue? Success in gigantic crimes sometimes implies a strength and energy which compel a kind of respect even from those who hate it most. The right supremacy of the power that thus sways our destiny, clearly does not reside in the overwhelming numbers of those that bear rule. The entire sum of all who have any direct connection with Slavery, as owners or hirers, is less than THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND,—not half as many as the inhabitants of the single city of New York! And yet even this number exaggerates the numerical force of the dominant element in our affairs. To approximate to the true result, it would be fair to strike from

the gross sum those owning or employing less than ten slaves, in order to arrive at the number of slaves who really compose the ruling influence of the nation. This would leave but a small fraction over NINETY THOUSAND, men, women and children, owning slaves enough to unite them in a common interest. And from this should be deducted the women and minors actually owning slaves in their own right, but who have no voice in public affairs. These taken away, and the absentees flying to Europe or the North from the moral contamination or material discomforts inseparable from Slavery, and not much more than FIFTY THOUSAND voting men will remain to represent this mighty and all-controlling power!—a fact as astounding as it is incontrovertible.

Oligarchies are nothing new in the history of the world. The government of the many by the few is the rule, and not the exception, in the politics of the times that have been, and of those that now are. But the concentration of the power that determines the policy, makes the laws, and appoints the ministers of a mighty nation, in the hands of less than the five hundredth part of its members, is an improvement on the essence of the elder aristocracies; while the usurpation of the title of the Model Republic and of Pattern Democracy, under which we offer ourselves to the admiration and imitation of less happy nations, is certainly a refinement on their nomenclature.

This prerogative of power, too, is elsewhere conceded by the multitude to their rulers generally for some especial fitness, real or imaginary, for the office they have assumed. Some services of their own or of their ancestors to the State, some superiority, natural or acquired, of parts or skill, at least some specialty of high cultre and elegant breeding, a quick sense of honor, a jealousy of insult to the public, an impatience of personal stain,—some or all of these qualities, appealing to the gratitude or to the imagination of the masses, have usually been

supposed to inhere in the class they permit to rule over them. By virtue of some or all of these things, the members have had allowed to them their privileges and their precedency, their rights of exemption and pre-eminence, their voice potential in the councils of the State, and their claim to be foremost in its defence in the hour of its danger. Some ray of imagination here is, which, falling on the knightly shields and heraldric devices that symbolize their conceded superiority, at least dazzles the eyes and delights the fancy of the crowd, so as to blind them to the inhering vices and essential fallacies of the Order to whose will they bow.

But no such consolations of delusions remain to us, as we stand face to face with the Power that holds our destiny in their hands. None of these blear illusions can cheat our eyes with any such false presentments. No antiquity hallows, no public services consecrate, no gifts of lofty culture adorn, no graces of noble breeding embellish the coarse and sordid oligarchy that gives law to us. And in the blighting shadow of Slavery, letters die, and art cannot live. What book has the South ever given to the libraries of the world? What work of art has she ever added to its galleries? What artist has she produced that did not instinctively fly, like Allston, to regions in which genius could breathe and art was possible? What statesman has she reared, since Jefferson died and Madison ceased to write, save those intrepid discoverers who have taught that Slavery is the corner-stone of republican institutions, and the vital element of Freedom herself? What divine, except the godly men whose theologic skill has attained to the doctrine that Slavery is of the essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? What moralist, except those ethic doctors who teach that it is according to the Divine Justice that the stronger race should strip the weaker of every civil, social and moral right? The unrighteous partiality, extorted by the threats of Carolina and Georgia in 1788, which gives them a disproportionate represen-

tation because of their property in men, and the unity of interest which makes them always act in behalf of Slavery as one man, have made them thus omnipotent. The North, distracted by a thousand interests, has always been at the mercy of whatever barbarian chief in the capitol could throw his slave-whip into the trembling scale of party. The government having been always, since this century began, at least, the creature and the tool of slaveholders, the whole patronage of the nation, and the territory filled chiefly by northern commerce, have been at their command to help, manipulate and mould plastic Northern consciences into practical shapes. When the slave-interest, consisting, at its own largest account of itself, of le[ss] than THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND souls, has *thir[ty]* members of the Senate, while the free-labor interest, consisti[ng] of at least TWENTY-FOUR MILLIONS, SIX HUNDRED AND FIF[TY] THOUSAND souls, has but *thirty-two ;* and when the former h[as] a delegation of some score of members to represent its sla[ve] in the House, besides its own fair proportion, can we mar[vel] that it has achieved the mastery over us, which is written [in] black and bloody characters on so many pages of our histor[y]

Such having been the absolute sway Slavery has exercis[ed] over the facts of our history, what has been its influence upo[n] the characters of the men with whom it has had to do? Of a[ll] the productions of a nation, its men are what proves its qualit[y] most surely. How have the men of America stood this test? Have those in the high places, they who have been called t[o] wait at the altar before all the people, maintained the dignit[y] of character and secured the general reverence which mark[ed] and waited upon their predecessors in the days of our sm[all] things? The population of the United States has multiplie[d] itself nearly ten-fold, while its wealth has increased in st[ill] greater proportion, since the peace of Eighty-Three. Hav[e] the Representative Men of the nation been made or maintaine[d] great and magnanimous, too? Or is that other anomal[y]

which has so perplexed the curious foreigner,(an admitted fact,) that in proportion as the country has waxed great and powerful, its public men have dwindled from giants in the last century to dwarfs in this? Alas! to ask the question is to answer it. Compare Franklin, and Adams, and Jay, met at Paris to negotiate the treaty of peace which was to seal the recognition of their country as an equal sister in the family of nations, with Buchanan, and Soule, and Mason, convened at Ostend to plot the larcency of Cuba! Sages and lawgivers, consulting for the world and a race, on the one hand, and bucaneers conspiring for the pillage of a sugar-island on the other.

What men, too, did not Washington and Adams call around them in the Cabinet!—how representative of great ideas! how historical! how immortal! How many of our readers can name the names of their successors of the present day? Isolated obscurities, bloated insignificancies, who knows or cares whence they came, or what they are? We know whose bidding they were appointed to obey, and what manner of work they are ready to perform. And shall we dare extend our profane comparisons even higher than the Cabinet? Shall we bring the shadowy majesty of Washington's august idea alongside the microscopic realities of to-day? Let us be more merciful, and take our departure from the middle term between the Old and the New, occupied by Andrew Jackson, whose iron will and doggedness of purpose gave definite character, if not awful dignity, to his image. In his time, the Slave Power, though always the secret spring which set events in motion, began to let its workings be seen more openly than ever before. And from his time forward, what a graduated line of still diminishing shadows have glided successfully through the portals of the White House! From Van Buren to Tyler, from Tyler to Polk, from Polk to Fillmore, from Fillmore to Pierce! "Fine by degrees, and beautifully less," until at last it reaches the vanishing point.

The baleful influence thus ever shed by Slavery on our national history and our public men has not yet spent its malignant forces. It has, indeed, reached a height which a few years ago it was thought the wildest fanaticism to predict; but its fatal power will not be stayed in the mid-sweep of its career. The ordinance of 1787 torn to shreds and scattered to the winds,—the line drawn in 1820, which the slave-holders plighted their faith Slavery should never overstep, insolently as well as infamously obliterated,—Slavery presiding in the Cabinet, seated on the Supreme Bench, absolute in the hall of Congress,—no man can say what shape its next aggressio may not take to itself. A direct attack on the freedom of t press and the liberty of speech at the North, where alone eith exists, were no more incredible than the later insolences of tyranny. The battle not yet over in Kansas, for the compulso establishment of Slavery there by the interposition of the F eral arms, will be renewed in every Territory as it is ripen into a State. Already warning voices are heard in the presaging such a conflict in Oregon. Parasites everywh instinctively feel that a zeal for the establishment of Slave where it has been abolished, or its introduction where it h been prohibited, is the highest recommendation to the Exec tive favor. The rehabilitation of the African slave-trade seriously proposed and will be furiously urged, and nothin can hinder its accomplishment but its interference with th domestic manufactures of the breeding Slave States. Th pirate Walker is already mustering his forces for another in cursion into Nicaragua, and rumors are rife that Gen Houst designs wresting yet another Texas from Mexico. Migh events are at hand, even at the door; and the mission of the all will be to fix Slavery firmly and forever on the thron of this nation.

Is the success of this conspiracy to be final and eternal? A the States which name themselves, in simplicity, or in iron

the Free States, to be always the satrapies of a central power like this? Are we forever to submit to be cheated out of our national rights by an oligarchy as despicable, as it is detestable, because it clothes itself in the forms of democracy, and allows us the ceremonies of choice, the name of power, and the permission to register the edicts of the sovereign? We, who broke the sceptre of King George, and set our feet on the supremacy of the British Parliament, surrender ourselves, bound hand and foot in bonds of our own weaving, into the hands of the slave-holding Philistines! We, who scorned the rule of the aristocracy of English acres, submit without a murmur, or with an ineffectual resistance, to the aristocracy of American flesh and blood! Is our spirit effectually broken? is the brand of meanness and compromise burnt in ineffaceably upon our souls? and are we never to be roused, by any indignities, to fervent resentment and effectual resistance? The answer to these grave questions lies with ourselves alone. One hundred thousand or three hundred thousand men, however crafty and unscrupulous, cannot forever keep under their rule more than twenty millions,—as much their superiors in wealth and intelligence as in numbers,—except by their own consent. If the growing millions are to be driven by cart-whips along the pathway of their history by the dwindling thousands, they have none to blame but themselves. If they like to have their laws framed and expounded, their presidents appointed, their foreign policy dictated, their domestic interests tampered with, their war and peace made for them, their national fame and personal honor tarnished, and the lie given to all their boastings before the old despotisms, by this insignificant fraction of their number,—scarcely visible to the naked eye in the assembly of the whole people,—none can gainsay or resist their pleasure.

But will the many always thus submit themselves to the domination of the few? We believe that the days of this igno-

minious subjection are already numbered. Signs in heaven and on earth tell us that one of those movements has began o be felt in the Northern mind, which perplex tyrannies everwhere with the fear of change. The insults and wrongs o long heaped upon the North by the South begin to be fe. The torpid giant moves uneasily beneath his mountain load indignities. The people of the North begin to feel that the support a government for the benefit of their natural enemies for, of all antipathies, that of slave labor to free is the most deadly and irreconcilable. There never was a time when the relations of the North and the South, as complicated by Slavery, were so well understood and so deeply resented a now. In fields, in farmhouses, and in workshops, there is spirit aroused, which can never be laid or exorcised till it ha done its task. We see its work in the great uprising of t Free States against the Slave States in the late national ele tion. Though trickery and corruption cheated it of its e the thunder of its protest struck terror into the hearts of tyrants. We hear its echo, as it comes back from the Sla States themselves, in the exceeding bitter cry of the whi from deliverance from the bondage which the slavery of t blacks has brought upon them also. We discern the confessio of its might in the very extravagances and violences of the Slav Power. It is its conscious and admitted weakness that ha made Texas, and Mexico, and Cuba, and our own Northwest ern Territory necessary to be devoured. It is desperation, an not strength, that has made the bludgeon and the bowie-knif integral parts of the national legislation. It has the America Government, and the American Church, in its national organi zations, on its side; but the Humanity and the Christianity o the Nation and the World abhor and execrate it. They tha be against it are more than they that be for it.

It rages, for its time is short; and its rage is the fierce because of the symptoms of rebellion against its despotism

which it discerns among the white men of the South, who, from poverty or from principle, have no share in its sway. When we speak of the South as distinguished from the North by elements of inherent hostility, we speak only of the governing faction, and not of the millions of nominally free men, who are scarcely less its thralls than the black slaves themselves. This unhappy class of our countrymen are the first to feel the blight which Slavery spreads around it, because they are the nearest to its noxious power. The subjects of no European despotism are under a closer *espionage*, or a more organized system of terrorism, than are they. The slaveholders, having the wealth, and nearly all the education that the South can boast of, employ these mighty instruments of power to create the public sentiment and to control the public affairs of their region, so as best to secure their own supremacy. No word of dissent to the institutions under which they live, no syllable of dissatisfaction, even, with any of the excesses they stimulate, can be breathed in safety. A Christian minister in Tennessee relates an act of fiendish cruelty inflicted upon a slave by one of the members of his church, and he is forced to leave his charge, if not to fly the country. Another in South Carolina presumes to express, in conversation, his disapprobation of the murderous assault of Brooks on Senator Sumner, and his pastoral relations are broken up on the instant, as if he had been guilty of gross crime or flagrant heresy. Professor Hedrick, in North Carolina, ventures to utter a preference for the Northern candidate in the last Presidential campaign, and he is summarily ejected from his chair, and virtually banished from his native State. Mr. Underwood, of Virginia, dares to attend the Convention of the party he preferred, and he is forbidden to return to his home on pain of death. The blackness of darkness and the stillness of death are thus forced to brood over that land which God formed so fair, and made to be so happy.

That such a tyranny should excite an antagonistic spirit of resistance is inevitable from the constitution of man and the character of God. The sporadic cases of protest and of resistance to the slave-holding aristocracy, which lift themselves occasionally above the dead level of the surrounding despotism, are representative cases. They stand for much more than their single selves. They prove that there is a widespread spirit of discontent, pervading great regions of the slave-land, which must one day find or force an opportunity of making itself heard and felt. This we have just seen in the great movement in Missouri, the very nursing mother of Border Ruffianism itself, which narrowly missed making Emancipation the policy of the majority of the voters there. Such a result is the product of no sudden culture. It must have been long and slowly growing up. And how could it be otherwise? There must be intelligence enough among the non-slaveholding whites to see the difference there is between themselves and persons of the same condition in the Free States. Why can they have no free schools? Why is it necessary that a missionary society be formed at the North to furnish them with such ministers as the slave master can approve? Why can they not support their own ministers, and have a Gospel of Free Labor preached to them, if they choose? Why are they hindered from taking such newspapers as they please? Why are they subjected to a censorship of the press, which dictates to them what they may or may not read, and which punishes booksellers with exile and ruin for keeping for sale what they want to buy? Why must Northern publishers expurgate and emasculate the literature of the world before it is permitted to reach them? Why is it that the value of acres increases in a geometrical ratio, as they stretch away towards the North Star from the frontier of Slavery? These questions must suggest their sufficient answer to thousands of hearts, and be preparing the way for the insurrection of which the slaveholders stand

in the deadliest fear,—that of the whites at their gates, who can do with them and their institutions what seems to them good, when once they know their power, and choose to put it forth. The unity of interest of the non-slaveholders of the South with the people of the Free States is perfect, and it must one day combine them in a unity of action.

The exact times when the millions of the North and of the South shall rise upon this puny mastership, and snatch from its hands the control of their own affairs, we cannot tell,—nor yet the authentic shape which that righteous insurrection will take unto itself. But we know that when the great body of any nation is thoroughly aroused, and fully in earnest to abate a mischief or to do a wrong, nothing can resist its energy or defeat its purpose. It will provide the way when its will is once thoroughly excited. Men look out upon the world they live in, and it seems as if a change for the better were hopeless and impossible. The great statesmen, the eminent divines, the reverend judges, the learned lawyers, the wealthy landholders and merchants all leagued together to repel innovation. But the earth still moves in its orbit around the sun; decay and change and death pursue their inevitable course; the child is born and grows up; the strong man grows old and dies; the law of flux and efflux never ceases; and, lo, ere men are aware of it, all things have become new. Fresh eyes look upon the world, and it is changed. Where are now Calhoun, and Clay, and Webster? Where will shortly be Cass, and Buchanan, and Benton, and their like? Vanished from the face of Nature. Who are to take their places? God knows. But we know that the school in which men are now in training for the arena is very different from the one which formed the past and passing generations of politicians. Great ideas are abroad, challenging the encounter of youth. Angels wrestle with the men of this generation, as with the patriarch of old, and it is our own fault if a blessing be not extorted ere

they take their flight. Principles like those, which in t earlier days of the republic elevated men into statesmen, a now again in the field, chasing the policies which have dwarf their sons into politicians. These things are portentous change,—perhaps sudden, but, however delayed, inevitable.

And this change, whatever the outward shape in which may incarnate itself, in the fullness of time, will come changed ideas, opinions, and feelings in the general mind a heart. All institutions, even those of the oldest of despotis exist by the permission and consent of those who live un them. Change the ideas of the thronging multitudes by banks of the Neva, or on the shores of the Bosphorous, they will be changed into Republicans and Christians in twinkling of an eye. Not merely the kingdom of Heaven, the kingdoms of this world, are within us. Ideas are t substance; institutions and customs but the shadows they into the visible sphere. Mould the substance anew, and projected shadow must represent the altered shape wit Hence the dread despots feel, and none more than the p despots of the plantation, of whatever may throw the ligh intelligence across the mental sight of their slaves. Men dure the ills they have, either because they think them b sings, or because they fear lest, should they seek to fly the it might be to others that they know not of. The pres Bonaparte holds France in a chain, because she is willing t he should. Let her but breathe upon the padlock, and, l that in the fable, it will fade into air, and he and his dyna will vanish with it. So the people of the North submit to domination of the South, because they are used to it, and a doubtful as to what may replace it. Whenever the millio North and South, whom Slavery grinds under her heel, sh be resolutely minded that her usurpation shall cease, it w disappear, and forever. As soon as the stone is thrown, t giant will die, and men will marvel that they endured him

long. But this can only come to pass by virtue of a change yet to be wrought in the hearts and minds of men. Ideas everywhere are royal;—here they are imperial. It is the great office of genius, and eloquence, and sacred function, and conspicuous station, and personal influence, to herald their approach, and to prepare the way before them, that they may assert their state, and give holy laws to the listening nation. Thus a glorious form and pressure may be given to the coming age. Thus the idea of a true republic, of a government of laws made and executed by the people, of which bards have sung and prophets dreamed, and for which martyrs have suffered and heroes died, may yet be possible to us, and the great experiment of this Western World be indeed a Model instead of a Warning to the nations.